

The Stage and its People



Yale just had to win something last week. It was the final heat in the "Ziegfeld Midnight Frolic" pogo race. If one's life insurance is paid up and there's plenty of liniment in the pantry, we suggest this as a breakfast teaser



If skirts must get shorter, why not adopt this "Midnight Frolic" creation?



Billy Kent, of "Good Morning, Dearie," wonders what the lady has on "the hip"

After hearing Will Rogers discuss his face, we decided not to offend him, and left it out of the sketch



Carl Randall, in "Ziegfeld's Midnight Frolic," shows how the young man may wear his derby and not be sensitive about it

The Theaters

By Percy Hammond

THE lamentation and breast beatings caused by the so-called inferior quality of the year's drama and seems, after a little examination, to be not wholly justified. Bad plays have been so numerous that we may have overlooked in our despair of them the respectable number of the good ones. With the season only half gone, quite an imposing catalogue of its adult entertainments may be assembled, and with no especial leniency exercised in the process. Including plays that are not masterpieces, but whose attributes place them above the mediocre, there have been or are a dozen or more encouraging exhibitions. Some of them, it is true, have been as candles in a draughty corridor, burning fitfully if at all; but that is not to be blamed on the playwrights or the producers. And the public, perhaps, has been no more remiss than usual in its attention to the "better things." If there has been a recent season with a record superior to the following it is not recalled by this casual observer:

"Ambush," "The Hero," "A Bill of Divorcement," "The Circle," "The Silver Fox," "The Straw," "Intimate Strangers," "The Whiteheaded Boy," "Anna Christie," "The Claw," "Dulcy," "The Madras House," "The Detour," "The Great Broxopp," "Daddy's Gone a-Hunting," "The Man's Name."

"The Man's Name" is included in the list because, if for no other reason, it brings Mr. Eugene Walter back to the mood and manner of "The Easiest Way" and "Paid in Full." With considerable skill it poses again that complex and ancient problem of domestic conduct involved in a woman's desertion of herself that she may succor her husband from a dire predicament. Mr. Walter and his collaborator, Miss Marjorie Chase, decide that the lady who disposed of her person for needed money in "The Man's Name" did the right thing. Also, that her husband, in angrily regarding for a time the expedient as dubious, was to be excused for such resentment and for his violent attitude toward the third person in the party. At the ending the husband and wife of "The Man's Name" are in blissful juxtaposition, while the other chap leaves the play, shot and humiliated. The scene is the shack of a New York novelist convalescing from tuberculosis—in the healing mountain air near Denver.

One morning in New York, before the play began, Mrs. Hal Marvin (Miss Dorothy Shoemaker) went into the room of her ailing husband (Mr. Lowell Sherman) and found him there sick unto death, delirious and with a thin, red stream issuing from his white lips. The doctor had told them that Denver was their only sanctuary, but they had no money. Frequent and varied as were Mr. Marvin's literary activities, they were not of a kind to bring him riches. Mrs. Marvin's solvent aunt had turned a bleak ear to their anguished importunities. So when he gasped, wanly, "I'm going West, Mary; but not the West we dreamed of," she grew desperate and resolved a horrid undertaking. Money to save him must be had, at whatever usury.

As Nora Helmer performed her classic forgery, and Monna Vanna went to Frinivalle's tent, clad but in a single garment, so did Mrs. Marvin resort to methods unconventional. Her former employer (Mr. Felix Krembs) an amorous and well-to-do publisher of books, had, in other days, given her signs of his admiration. She knew, with a woman's intuition, that she was, as the saying is, in his blood. Therefore, she entered into reluctant negotiations. In return for \$3,000 she agreed to dine alone with him and to spend the night at a hotel. She had the loathing for her host that Judith had for Holofernes, and she emerged from the hated rendezvous with a big check instead of a gory head.

With the money thus earned Mr. Marvin was saved to his wife and to literature, for with it they achieved the salubrious Rockies, where,

Sorry, Mister Ziegfeld, but when we decided to pick the prettiest chorus girl we saw last week, we hung the blue on Dorothy McKail of "Good Morning, Dearie." How the Samuel T. Hill did you overlook her?

Stage Gossip

THE third of the group of six theaters, which the Shuberts are building in West Forty-eighth and Forty-ninth streets, will be opened next month and is to be known as the Forty-ninth Street Theater. It is situated west of the Ambassador, and like that house and the Ritz, is of the small, intimate variety of playhouse. In design and appointments it is similar to the Booth, but there are no boxes. Special mechanical apparatus which can be operated by one man from the stage level will be a feature

of the stage and will promote efficiency in running the performances. he having been made whole again, composed much lucrative fiction. You see them in the first act, a picture of hut-happiness. He is strong, handsome and less a human plume than Mr. Sherman's portraits usually are. She is comely and ingratiating as she cooks the tinned soup, and a little worried because her publisher is at hand and is coming to dinner. Mr. Marvin proudly mails a check to the geld aunt, who, he thinks, is the instrument of his salvation. Mrs. Marvin intercepts it. Exposure ensues. In a tense scene of inquisition he corners her pitifully and demands the man's name.

The uxorious husband who faces a contretemps of this character is in the sorriest of the triangle's plights. If he understands, appreciates and condones his woman's sacrifice he suggests an unforgivable compliance, though he hath it not. If he resents her mournful device, and looks upon it as an impurity, we indict him for a monstrous ingratitude. Consequently, in a play he is seldom an endearing figure. In "The Man's Name" the betrayed husband summons his selfless wife and her pseudo lover to a thrilling interview. He speaks cruelly to both of them. Though he is rich in his share of the hideous bargain, he is ungrateful. Mrs. Marvin has won her husband's health through her sacrifice. The book publisher has enjoyed the commercial caresses of virtuous white arms. But it is this evil one who, though as essential to the play's happiness, as Judas was to salvation, finds the episode most expensive. Marvin, after frightening him almost to death with threats of assassination, shoots him in the knuckles as a degrading symbol of his contempt, and he staggers out into the night maimed physically and in his feelings. The Marvins, then, engage themselves in the platitudinous embrace of the final curtains,



Leon Errol, of "The Midnight Frolic," in his jag dance. He looked more like the "Pied Piper," with all those mousey beauties mimicking in his wake

The opening attraction has not yet been selected.

A striking feature of the American production of "The Wild Cat," which opened last night at the Park Theater, is the drop curtain which is lowered during the intermezzo of the second act. It is a huge silk and lace Spanish shawl of luminous white, upon which great fluorescent wreaths have been embroidered by the most skillful needlewomen in the royal weaving establishment of King Alfonso, and was first used at the royal premiere of the Penella opera in Madrid.

The fifth offering of the Shuberts at the Century Theater will be a revival of "The Chocolate Soldier," which scored such a success upon its presentation twelve years ago. Donald Brian and Tessa Kosta will have the leading roles in this new production, with a supporting cast that will include John Dunsmore, J. Humbird Duffey, Virginia O'Brien, Mildred Rogers and Detmar Poppen. The story of "The Chocolate Soldier" is founded on Bernard Shaw's play "Arms and the Man." Stanislaus Stange wrote the

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New Plays

THE theater is geared at a languid pace as the pre-holiday season approaches. The preoccupation of Christmas shopping and the diversion of money to the stores always affect the patronage of the theater. Accordingly there will be fewer new offerings until the arrival of the grand splurge of the holidays following Christmas.

The three departures of the week just closed are balanced by three attractions which have their premieres this week. David Belasco's production of "Kiki," starring Lenore Ulric, supplants "The Return of Peter Grimm" at the Belasco Theater. The Theater Guild replaces "Ambush" with "The Wife With a Smile" and "Boubo-reche" at the Garrick, and the Arthur Richmond play going into the Belmont. "Her Salary Man" relights the Cort Theater. Besides "Peter Grimm" there are two other withdrawals, "Golden Days," with Helen Hayes, at the Gaiety and "The Straw" at the Greenwich Theater. Miss Hays will go on tour. "The Straw" will be seen at special matinees in an uptown theater.

The Theater Guild will present its (Continued on page four)

New Theatrical Offerings

MONDAY—At the Garrick Theater the Theater Guild will present two plays from the French, "The Wife With a Smile," by Denys Amiel and Andre Obey, and "Boubo-reche," by Georges Courteline. Arnold Daly will have the lead in both plays. The supporting cast (1), Blanche Yurka, Frank Belcher, Catherine Proctor, Martha and Bryan Allen, Jeanne Wainwright, Katherine Clinton, Edwin R. Wolfe and Philip Loeb; (2), Olive May, Katherine Clinton, Robert Donaldson, Edgar Stehli, Edwin R. Wolfe and Philip Loeb.

At the Cort Theater John Curt in association with Alex Aaronson will present "Her Salary Man," with Ruth Shepley, A. H. Van Buren, Will Deming, Edna May Oliver, Grace Carlyle, Thomas E. Jackson, Dudley Clement, Hope Sutherland, Donald Call, Hedley Hall and Harold Thomas.

TUESDAY—At the Belasco Theater David Belasco will present Lenore Ulric in "Kiki," a character study by Andre Picard, adapted by Mr. Belasco. The supporting cast: Sam B. Hardy, Max Figman, Thomas Findlay, Sidney Toler, Saxon Kling, Thomas Mitchell, Harry Burkhardt, Arline Fredericks, Pauline Moore, Florence Lee, Gertrude Bond, Mignon Rameer, Jean Scott and Frances Kyle.

On London Boards

From The Tribune's European Bureau

LONDON, November 1.

WILL the archaic censorship of plays in England be reformed? This oft-debated question is revived by the death of Lord Sandhurst, the Lord Chamberlain, in connection with the appointment of whose successor the present position of the stage censorship may come up for Parliamentary discussion and possibly revision.

Parliament began the censorship and Parliament can modify or abolish it. The advocates of "blue" laws are as old in England as the Roundheads, though not so dead as Queen Anne, and the censorship has stood since Walpole was misled by a trick into passing an act establishing it. The persons interested hired an underling to write a piece called "The Golden Rump," a farrago of blasphemy and political abuse, and had it put up to Walpole. The Prime Minister, shocked by its enormity, read its worst passages in the House of Commons, and an act was immediately passed, with one dissentient voice, for submitting all dramatic pieces to the Lord Chamberlain's inspection.

The Lord Chamberlain is a court official, and it is doubtful if any holder of the office has ever been actively responsible for the censoring of plays. That duty devolves on a subordinate official of his department, the King's Reader of Plays, who is assisted by a staff of advisers. If this body refuses to license a play there is no appeal, because the licenser, as a court official, is not responsible to Parliament. Advocates of abolition of the censorship—who include many eminent dramatists—argue that public opinion is all the safeguard of public morality that is required. Others suggest that the Public Prosecutor could deal with the producers of prurient plays, just as he deals at present with the producers of obscene books. Even opponents of abolition agree that the present system is so full of annoyances that a revision of censorship is needed.

The Lord Chamberlain's censorship has recently come into prominence in connection with Oscar Asche's production of "Cairo." First of all the censor

objected to the title, which in deference to his view was changed from "Meca." Then when the play was produced it fell foul of him again, due to the inclusion of a scene variously described by the critics as "erotic," "stark sensuality," "the greatest anatomical exhibition ever seen on the stage" and "probably marking a record for the display of ladies' ribs." Oscar Asche said that the audience didn't appear to be shocked if the critics were, and that all that was wrong was that the show was British, whereas if it had been French or Russian—he cited the Russian Ballet—not a word would have been said. But, anyway, after the censor's representations he concluded to modify the scene.

"Cairo"—due, it is fair to say, not to the censor's advertisement but to its merits as a spectacle—promises to rival the run of its predecessor, "Chu Chin Chow." There is no doubt about the popularity in London of this class of show. It is a far cry from the Church Congress to the bankruptcy court, but the two are linked by Lena Ashwell's complaint at the former that the public will not patronize serious plays, and Sir Thomas Beecham's story at the latter of his losses on the production of serious operas. Lena Ashwell is too sweeping in her criticism. That there is a market for the better drama is shown by the success of "Abraham Lincoln," Clemence Dane's "A Bill of Divorcement" and other plays that are now running. But, in general, it is true that the theatrical productions of the day are light and ephemeral and that managers give the public what they believe the public wants.

Much the same is true of opera. A grand opera season is running at Covent Garden, but box office records go to the Gilbert and Sullivan operas. This year's Gilbert and Sullivan season, to be extended till after Christmas, is breaking even these operas' previous records. Their vitality is astonishing. Perhaps the most remarkable fact

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